



Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted/accepted for publication in the following source:

Vu, Nga Duong Thuy & [Nguyen, Linh Cuong](#)
(2009)

Reflections on models and solutions for library and information science (LIS) education in Vietnam. In

Conference Proceedings: Towards Dynamic Libraries and Information Services in Southeast Asian Countries, Vietnamese Library Association, Hanoi, Vietnam, pp. 217-221.

This file was downloaded from: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/108820/>

© Copyright 2009 [please consult the author]

Notice: *Changes introduced as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing and formatting may not be reflected in this document. For a definitive version of this work, please refer to the published source:*

REFLECTIONS ON MODELS AND SOLUTIONS FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

*Vu Duong Thuy Nga, Nguyen Cuong Linh
Hanoi University of Culture*

Abstract: *This research paper analyzes trends in librarianship and practical requirements towards LIS education in the world at present and in the future. It discusses requirements of theory and practical skills that need to be improved in LIS education and training. The paper presents characteristics of librarianship and requirements with regard to LIS education and training in Vietnam, and summarizes the current status of LIS education. It also proposes models and solutions to improve LIS education and training in Vietnam.*

Keywords: training, education, LIS, model, solution, Vietnam

In recent decades, the development of technical sciences and information technology has impacted on all social sectors, including library information profession. The strong application of information technology in the library has increased the number of electronic and digital resources, and especially, has emerged new library models such as electronic libraries, digital libraries and virtual libraries.

The use of modern information technology has significantly changed the library profession. In a modern library environment, the mission of library staff is not only to lend books, newspapers and traditional materials, but more important, is to help the user access electronic information sources and materials. Therefore, the role and the requirements with regard to the library staff have changed. From the book keepers and book lenders in the past, librarians have become information experts. They must have good knowledge of information resources; know how to evaluate information products as well as ways to access them.

Librarians have become multi-functional staff. It is essential for them to know not only how to organize, process and preserve information resources, but also to undertake the role of information and information technology literacy trainers (including training on-site and distance training). Besides, they should also play the role of managers (management of information systems, packaging management, document management, and management of information resources).

To accomplish such substantial missions in the constant changing environment, besides undertaking traditional library tasks, library and information professionals should have the following new capabilities and qualifications:

- Good understanding of information technology and know how to apply it in the library.
- Ability to access and use information resources, including online information resources and documents on the areas that readers and users interested in.

- Ability to evaluate software and equipment.
- Ability to build databases and to apply professional standards in the library.
- Ability to use computer proficiently to exploit information, especially to manage and maintain data, and to disseminate electronic information via networks or the Internet.
- Ability to disseminate knowledge and skills to colleagues and information users.
- Competency in foreign languages, especially English.

Development trends of the librarianship have caused new challenges and tasks for the LIS training. To deal with the risk of lagging behind and to keep up with changes of the profession, LIS schools have been innovating training programs and teaching methods to equip learners with theoretical and practical skills that connect closely with the modern library environment.

Vietnam is a developing country, library activities have been attracted attention of the government and industry at all levels. The application of information technology has been gradually strengthening since the 1980s. Some digital libraries and electronic library has been developed. However, such innovations have just emerged at some large libraries and the application of new information technology has not been consistent among libraries. A majority of Vietnamese libraries have been still operating under traditional methods and the modernization of libraries is still the goal of Vietnamese libraries.

In order to provide professional library and information human resources for the country, the LIS training in Vietnam has been interested in. Many LIS training institutions have been setup such as the Library and Information Faculty - Hanoi University of Culture, Faculty of Information and Library - University of Social Sciences & Humanities under Hanoi National University, Library and Information Science Faculty - University of Social Science & Humanities under National University of Ho Chi Minh City, Library and Information Faculty - Ho Chi Minh City University of Culture, etc. Additionally, a wide range of institutions also provide LIS training programs such as schools of arts and culture, pedagogic schools of provinces throughout the country, and private institutions (The Faculty of Information Sciences and Information Management - Dong Do university).

Some sectors also setup their own LIS schools such as the Faculty of Library Sciences - Military College of Arts and Culture that provides librarians for the Vietnamese People's Army. Until 2008-2009, there are 54 schools participating in LIS training at college level and above, in which 9 of them offer undergraduate programs and 3 offer postgraduate programs at master level. Currently, Hanoi University of Culture is the only one that offers all above level including doctorate (Bui, 2009).

The LIS training in Vietnam is conducted in two ways: professional training and continuous training. Professional training consists of five levels that offer learners degrees after completing their courses such as intermediate degree, college bachelor degree, university

bachelor degree, master's degree and doctorate degree. Continuous training equips beginning learners with basic professional skills and helps trained learners update their professional knowledge. This training method is usually implemented in universities and large libraries and information centers such as National Library of Vietnam, National Centre for Scientific and Technological Information, Military Library, Institute of Medicine Information Centre, etc. Upon completion of the courses, learners are awarded certificates.

Overall, LIS education and training in Vietnam has the following notable characteristics:

Achievements

- Most of the LIS institutions in Vietnam have experience in training and are interested in updating curriculum and teaching methods. During the process of development of the curriculums, LIS institutions have studied that of the developed countries and consulted foreign experts in order to create LIS training programs meeting the needs of the society. A typical example is the Faculty of Library and Information Science, Hanoi University of Culture that has innovated training programs at least 3 times as it has made significant changes in training program in the years of 1992, 1997 and 2003. In order to keep up with the current trends of LIS education in the world as well as to meet the changing needs of the society, once again, in 2008, the Faculty updated its curriculum by adding some new subjects such as digital libraries, electronic publishing, web design and management, system analysis, and public relations. In addition, the Faculty has also updated the library and information services subject on a basis of the previous subject named professional work with readers.
- LIS institutions in Vietnam have updated their training programs by adding subjects relating to information sciences and information technology as well as their application in the library. Together with such a trend, they have also renamed their faculties by adding the word “information” to the names of the faculties instead of just library as previously.
- Some LIS institutions have developed their learning resources such as textbooks reference books to effectively serve teaching and learning purposes. Hanoi University of Culture is one of the institutions that has paid much attention to building learning resources.
- LIS institutions consistently follow the training method of “theory must go together with practice”. Apart from integrating practical knowledge into each subject, all students are required to take part in practicum programs at a library or information center.

Weaknesses

- There is a great number of institutions participating in the LIS training in Vietnam. Besides experienced LIS faculties with qualified staff, well-equipped infrastructure, practical libraries, and computer lab with software for special purposes, many institutions without such conditions still implement their training programs.

- There is a lack of an appropriate authority to control the quality of LIS education and training in Vietnam
- Continuous training in LIS has not been paid enough attention
- Current LIS programs in Vietnam have just mainly focused on providing learners with general knowledge and skills relating to the profession. They have not concentrated on training human resources for special libraries and information centers.
- As for postgraduate training, including master and doctorate levels, the learners must be previously trained in LIS. LIS institutions have not recruited students for postgraduate courses without LIS background.

Proposal of new models

From the above discussion, we propose some models for LIS education and training that may meet the requirements of the occupation such as training on request, training for special purposes, and recruiting postgraduate students from other disciplines.

In practice, there is a large number of staff who is working in special and school libraries but has not been trained in LIS. Additionally, many people were trained in LIS but do not have opportunities to update new knowledge. This is because of many reasons such as their working places are too far from centers where LIS institutions located while e-learning or distance learning methods are not common in Vietnam. Therefore, training on request model enables library staff to access training programs at their convenience

Furthermore, LIS institutions should also include subjects or programs for learners who work in special libraries. If library staff has only knowledge on LIS, they may cope with challenges as they work in special libraries with deeply characterized requirements of special libraries such as medical libraries, agricultural libraries, and philosophy library, etc.

To deal with this problem, we may apply the model that is offering LIS tertiary programs on the basis of other disciplines. In the other words, LIS institutions may recruit students who already graduated from other disciplines. This model is commonly adopted in many countries all over the world and was previously applied at Hanoi University of Culture.

Those who have graduated from other disciplines can also participate in a LIS program at undergraduate or postgraduate levels after completing some supplementary subjects. By applying this model, LIS institutions may provide high quality human resources for libraries and information centers to meet specialized needs of special libraries.

Solutions

Apart from the models proposed above, we would also like to suggest some solutions to improve the quality of LIS human resources in Vietnam. Those solutions are: enhancing

continuous education in LIS, deploying distance learning, controlling quality assurance in LIS education and learning resources, and constantly improving capacities of LIS lecturers.

Firstly, to improve capacities of library and information professionals, it is necessary to enable them to access continuous education opportunities. Together with the development of a knowledge economy and the constant changes of the library and information profession, the life-long learning of library and information professionals is very important. Improving LIS skill classes should focus on emerging issues in LIS. These classes should be delivered in various modes such as on-site training (inviting experts or lecturers to teach at libraries and information centers), training by topics and distance training.

Secondly, it is essential to establish a committee or the like that will be in charge of quality assurance in LIS education, including LIS curriculums, learning resources, and to standardize LIS education in Vietnam. It is extremely important to setup compulsory requirements or criteria for LIS institutions. To do so, the Library Association of Vietnam should propose a plan to setup a committee for monitoring and controlling these issues.

Thirdly, in order to have high quality LIS staff, it is crucial to have qualified lecturers who directly participate in the training process. They must have deep and wide knowledge of the discipline as well as can master teaching tools and methods. Hence, teaching staff must continually improve their professional knowledge as well as teaching methods. Besides, LIS institutions need also to offer teaching staff opportunities to empower their capacities by joining advanced classes, attending domestic and international professional conferences, etc.

Bibliographies

- Brophy, P. (2001). *The library in the twenty-first century: New services for the information age*. London: Library Association.
- Bui, L. T. (2009). Enhance the quality of library and information human resources at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in a new environment. *Library Journal of Vietnam*. 1, 3-12.
- Vu, D. T. N. (2004). *Models and solutions on training library and information human resources in Vietnam in the modern information society: A ministry-level research project*. Hanoi: Ministry of Culture and Communication.
- Vu, D. T. N. (2005). Thoughts on qualifications and capacities of library and information professionals in the current circumstance. *Library Journal of Vietnam*. 1, 11-14.
- Vu, D. T. N. (2006). Some issues for consideration in training library and information human resources in Vietnam. *Library Journal of Vietnam*. 4, 14-17.